

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 02943 261801Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8666

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UK, EC

SUBJECT: EC REFERENDUM WHITE PAPER PUBLISHED

1. WILSON GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED WHITE PAPER SPELLING OUT
DETAILS OF PROPOSED EC REFERENDUM FEBRUARY 26. COMPLETE
TEXT FOLLOWS BY POUCH. MAJOR POINTS INCLUDE:

- REFERENDUM WILL BE HELD BEFORE END OF JUNE;
- SIMPLE MAJORITY, "WITHOUT QUALIFICATIONS OR
CONDITIONS OF ANY KIND," WILL DETERMINE OUTCOME WHICH
WILL BE BINDING ON GOVERNMENT;
- VOTES WILL BE COUNTED CENTRALLY, PRODUCING
SINGLE NATIONAL TALLY (GOVERNMENT ESTIMATES COUNT WILL
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PAGE 02 LONDON 02943 261801Z

TAKE FIVE DAYS);

-- GOVERNMENT SUGGESTS, BUT IS NOT COMMITTED TO, FOLLOWING PHRASING OF REFERENDUM QUESTION: "THE GOVERNMENT HAVE ANNOUNCED RESULTS OF RENEGOTIATION OF UK'S TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP IN EC. DO YOU THINK UK SHOULD STAY IN EC?;

-- MASSIVE GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN WOULD BE "INAPPROPRIATE," BUT GOVERNMENT WILL MAIL POPULAR EXPLANATION OF RENEGOTIATION RESULTS TO EACH REGISTERED VOTER, ALONG WITH SINGLE DOCUMENT CONTAINING PRO AND CON STATEMENTS FROM EACH CAMP;

-- GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO CONSIDER LIMITED CASH GRANTS FOR EACH SIDE, AND WILL PERMIT BROADCAST AUTHORITIES TO RUN SERIES OF PROGRAMS, SUBJECT TO CONSTRAINTS WHICH APPLY TO NORMAL ELECTION; AND

-- FORMAT OF BALLOT PAPER WILL BE DETERMINED AFTER CONSULTATION WITH POLITICAL PARTIES AND CONCERNED ORGANIZATIONS.

2. COMMENT: CHANCELLOR DENIS HEALEY TOLD POLITICAL COUNSELLOR FEB. 25 THAT CABINET WAS SPLIT ON SINGLE NATIONAL TALLY QUESTION AND THAT HE LED FIGHT AGAINST THOSE FAVORING REGIONAL OR CONSTITUENCY COUNTS. THIS WILL BE MOST CONTENTIOUS POINT WHEN WHITE PAPER IS DEBATED IN COMMONS AFTERNOON OF FEB. 26, AS ANTI-MARKETEERS AND NATIONALIST PARTIES STRONGLY FAVOR CONSTITUENCY OR REGIONAL TALLY. WE ALSO ANTICIPATE TORIES WILL TAKE ISSUE WITH REFERENDUM ITSELF AND WITH GOVERNMENT DECISION TO BE BOUND BY UNQUALIFIED, SIMPLE MAJORITY, AS THEY FEAR TURNOUT MAY BE SO SMALL AS TO BE INCONCLUSIVE INDICATION OF WILL OF BRITISH PEOPLE. THERE IS OUTSIDE CHANCE THAT THESE FORCES CAN COALESCE TO BLOCK OR DELAY PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION OR TO IMPOSE SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENTS TO GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS.

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